

Date: March 19, 2007

To: House Human Services Committee

From: *A* Twila Costigan, MSF/APA (Montana State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association)

RE: SB 504—Clothing Allowance Survey Results

MSF/APA representatives realized during testimony and discussion at the 2006 Legislative Interim Committee dealing with the DPHHS Child and Family Services Division that the Clothing Allowance Support Service was not being implemented as intended in all areas of the State. The 2005 Legislature moved the Clothing Allowance Support Service to a line item and intended this \$200 Allowance to be available for every foster child every 6 months while they were in a State foster care placement.

In order to gather information from a variety of foster parents across our state a survey targeting Clothing Allowances was developed. 150 surveys were made available to foster parents attending the September 2006 MSF/APA Annual Training Conference in Great Falls. Attendees at the conference live in all areas of the State. The Survey asked parents to give us information about the Clothing Allowance Support Service. In particular we were focused upon whether foster parents had received clothing allowance as intended to be implemented by the 2005 Legislature: \$200 every 6 months for each child.

Here are the results:

- 150 surveys were made available
- 94 (63%) surveys were returned
 - ⇒ 73 (78%) foster parents responded that they were unaware of the Clothing Allowance Support Service
 - ⇒ 6 (6.4%) foster families stated they had received a one-time clothing allowance for at least one of their foster children
 - ⇒ 10 (11%) foster families stated they had heard about the clothing allowance, but felt no need for it
 - ⇒ 5 (5.3%) foster families stated they had requested help but received various answers as to why no funding was available